

BLACK YOUTH IN THE ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND NOTTING HILL GATE LONDON 1973

WHERE IS THE GAIETY ?

Contradictions between middle-class idealism and working-class realities produce infinite questions. Stills, shot over 3 weeks in Summer 1973, are used to make a theoretical discussion more concrete.

Claire:

"An English publication about adventure playgrounds from 1972 says: ... 'Fencings devise an acceptable area that will keep people out of an adventure playground when it is supposed to be closed and provides children with activities in a world of their own that gives them a sense of comfortable enclosure. ...'"

"... there is gaiety in the air somehow at this adventure playground and you feel it as soon as you enter through the gate from the dreary street of the poor and worn out neighbourhood."

Don:

"The young people between 13 and 20 standing outside the gate looking nostalgically backwards to their childhood and forward with feelings that they will be deprived of better things in life."

"... a sense of comfortable enclosure"? "... deprived of better things in life"?



"... Socially killed daily by British democracy"? "... aggressive towards anything that breaks in from the outside"?

Don:

"Most of the parents in this area say 'We want our children helped towards a better future.' Dashiki black community says: 'Our black children are being socially killed daily by British democracy, tolerance and fair play ...'"

"This area around the playground consists mainly of workers"

families and most of the parents are emigrants from the West Indies. ..."

"... they came to Britain in their thousands in 1950 because of a labour shortage in Britain after the war. They came from an impoverished black commonwealth country to find opportunity but instead found themselves at the lowest paid jobs in England."

A 9 min. short film b/w from stills by Wilfried Thust, distributed by THE OTHER CINEMA (01-734 8508/9)

CONCORD FILMS (0473 7601 2) (In conjunction with a film about the same playpark from 1969 "This is our Playpark" b/w 16mm 16 min.)

FOUR CORNER FILMS (01-981 4243) (Leaflets may be obtained from FOUR CORNER FILMS)

Don:

"We met 13 year old Sylvester between street and playground moving on an old bicycle with fashionable handlebars."

Frank:

"What do you think about the playpark, like when you go there to play?"

Sylvester: "Well, I never go there to play, I go there to play cricket. ."

F: "You remember the situation of how you ended up in a slum, and about your friends and all that, but . . . you could start perhaps with the situation of the teacher . . ."

S: "Yes, I was in my maths lesson and, and . . . a girl run out of the class and he went after, after the girl to get her back in and I stood behind the door, and when he came back, I won't let him in, he was saying, Sylvester, let me in and I was forcing all my strength and he pushed me, right and he squashed me and he dig me mum out and I made a holy murley and I, I got to the headmistress and she suspended me, she gave me a letter to give to my dad, and I came in very late, . . . about 11 and he beat me, because I never answered him and he beat me, so I run away. . .

Claire:

"Sylvester likes to be photographed and interviewed, acting stands for his longing to be, what he can't reach."

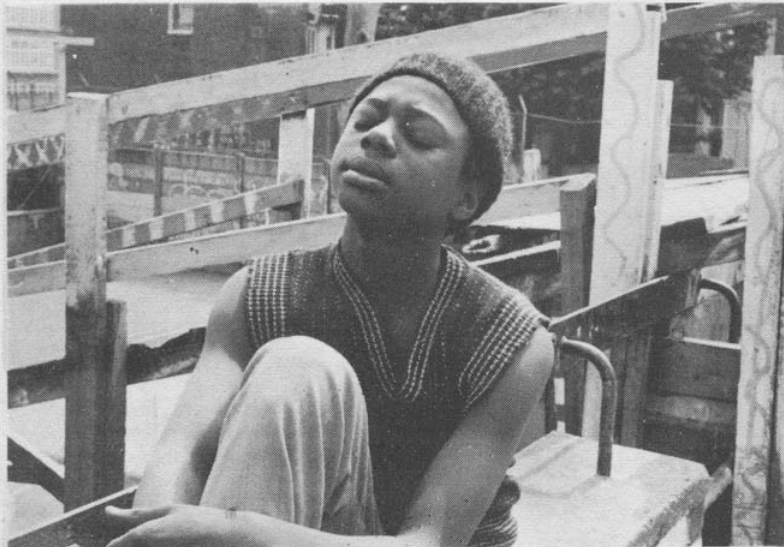
S: "Oh . . . I ought to be famous."

C: "He left his house, the school, the playground and he will leave the reception home soon, there are not many possibilities for him, borstel is one."

Don:

"In comparison to Sylvester is Vaughan and the group around him. The playground covers them like a paradisiac island against outside problems, though they know that from this island they will gain nothing, just hanging around with this feeling of dissatisfaction makes them overconscious and aggressive towards anything that breaks in from the outside, in this case towards the cameraman, Wilfried. They know Wilfried, but hate to be photographed without set up or pose. It drifts them further, revealing there real selves which they can't bear to see."

"... eh, . . . I ought to be famous"? "... just hanging around with this feeling of dissatisfaction"?



"... he represents Neill's idea and lets things happen" ?

"... but she isn't taught to articulate" ?

Claire:

"Neill formulates for Summerhill: The whole idea is to be yourself. Children should be free, we shouldn't interfere, say and preach, let the children solve their own problems . . ."

Francis read Theology and Philosophy at Cambridge before coming to this place. He is patient, careful, always there, outside and on the children's side, he represents Neill's idea and lets things happen, and let's the children solve their own problems.

Don:

"Frustration comes in finding out that, a . . . white people have a general guide line, a discipline, a goal they want to reach. 20 years old Patrick expresses about his youth: Since I have been in this country, I never had a true English friend, there was always this

Don:

"Barbara plays with Alex who hasn't got a job. Barbara wild and clever ascertaining her beauty, she physically knows how to deal with people, but isn't taught to articulate in abstract terms. Fuck off, means a thousand times a thousand things, fuck off."

Claire:

"The house opposite the playground has an important influence. It is a commune for 16 to 24 year old blacks. These kids are unstable in mental and dead end jobs."

Sylvester: "They are very disgusting boys, they always making love to girls, badry girls, 10 under 1, that is very bad and it stinks. They ought to go in prison."

Frank:

"They what?"

photographing other people

intruding

voyeur

science / research

in disguise

mask

weapon

hunting

taking

curiosity

projection , what we want to see
what we expect to see
our perception
our hope or despair

meeting others is a kind of confrontation
it can be an eye opener
and in that we are fighting death

can film ever be the
adignate means to solve
problems?

documentary versus fiction
soap

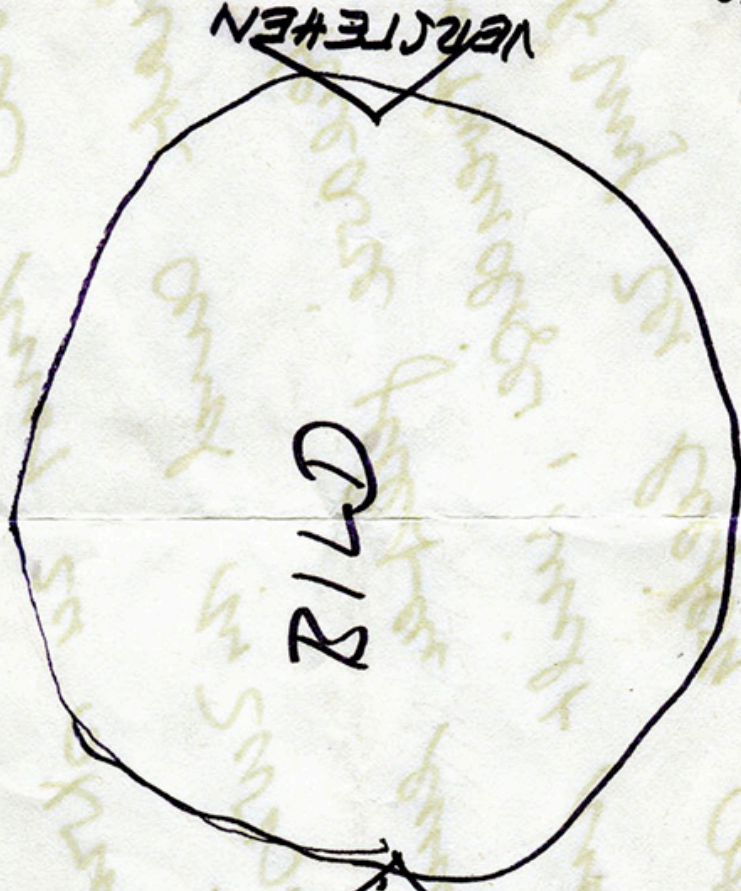
anti muslim group

classroom versus cinema

VOR-
WISSEN
ABSICHT
ERWARTUNG
VOR-
HALTUNG
WISSEN

EMPFÄNGER

PARTNER
SITUATION
EINSCHÄTZUNG



VOR-
WISSEN
ABSICHT

AUTOR

PARTNER
EINSCHÄTZUNG
SITUATION

Dies Schema ist vollständig
durch das man zu stricken vermag.

Ich habe auch zwischen mehr
nunmehr keine felsen und alle
Brocken zu liefern, nicht nur eine
Stellen zu liefern, sondern

~~Einzelne~~ insinieren zu geben. d. h. Seilungen
herzustellen.

PLAYGROUND

SYLVESTER
STORY

Pictures of
PLAYGROUND: SILVESTER IN THE
GROUP ON THE PLAYGROUND.

PARENTS' HOME

SITUATIONS: STARTS WITH RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN PLAYGROUND and House opposite
DRUGS

OPPRESSION BY INSTITUTIONS

PLAYGROUND: Idea of anti-authoritative
Education

JOB: ~~of~~ ATTITUDES: I don't want to
overtake a shitty job. Making money with
out work. Trying to get things from other people.

JOB SITUATION IN THE
INSTITUTIONS WHOLE

SCHOOL

POLICE

RECEPTION HOME

↓
CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES.